GRAPHIC DESIGN STUDIO PRACTICE

Spring 2016

CFA AR 523

LEVEL	Studio · client-based
CREDITS	2
MEETS	[confirm]
DATES	Spring 2016
LOCATION	[confirm]
INSTRUCTOR	Professor Nicholas Rock
OFFICE	[confirm]
CONTACT	nickrock@bu.edu
OFFICE HOURS	Mondays and Wednesdays 12–2; by appointment Thursdays after class

01

Overview

> To experience, to engage, to endeavor, rather than to watch and to wonder —that's where the real meat of life is to be found. Inspiration and growth only come from adversity and from challenge—from stepping away from what's comfortable and familiar and stepping out into the unknown. —Ben Saunders

Design is as much about process, critical thinking and social responsibility as it is about aesthetics and form. Projects, clients' needs, the field of graphic design are all constantly and rapidly changing. Changes can happen across disciplines or from one medium to another; how we as designers adapt to those changes, employing traditional design techniques and using the newest technology, is about more than aesthetics and form. It is about practicing a process of research and discovery that can solve design problems no matter how content, technology, and styles change over time.

The goal of this course is to function as both a teaching and learning environment. The structure of the course allows for the coverage of a broad range of graphic design related skills in both instruction and practical application. The course is designed to function as a working design studio where the students have the opportunity to work on

real client based projects and engage directly with clients. Ultimately we will be stressing the value of learning through experiences.

02

Learning Outcomes

Your general performance will be evaluated based upon a set of learning objectives for design majors here at BU:

1. Generate a body of work that applies design thinking to develop visual communication skills
2. Develop a design process
3. Learn design agility; design across multiple modalities
4. Articulate a unique and individual design voice and visual methodology
5. Develop a holistic understanding of design's past, present and future
6. Professionally develop

Topics Covered

Creating proposals, scoping workload, conducting meetings, presentations, professional communication, research and design processes, content development, writing, and design production.

03

Course Structure

Teaching + Learning Sessions

There will be specifically designed workshop or lecture based sessions and discussions surrounding the following topics at different times throughout the semester and in no particular order:

- **The Space in Which We Work.** We will discuss what makes up a successful graphic design studio environment by researching and touring existing professional studios and designing our own studio environment for the summer.
- **Communication Part 1: The Design Brief.** Project scope of work, deliverables, budget, schedule and plan will be discussed and implemented with real world projects.
- **Communication Part 2: Professionalism.** How do we communicate with peers and clients in the professional world. How do we present ourselves in public as designers.
- **Communication Part 3: The Art of Presentation.** Nearly as important as the work itself, is the way it is presented. We will discuss and practice speaking and presenting ideas.
- **The Charrette.** The idea of a charrette is when all of the designers in the studio work on design concepts and then come together for critique and dialogue. We will discuss this topic by conducting charrettes in our own studio for every project.

- **Client Feedback.** How do we receive and respond to client feedback. What happens when a client is happy vs. unhappy. How do we process and translate client feedback and direction to continue with a design process.

Site Visits

There will be a series of trips scheduled over the course of the semester:

- **Epic Decade** — in our study of how design studios work we will visit Epic Decade and possibly 1 to 2 other studios to tour their space and interact with employees.
- **Printer (TBD)** — to learn more about production we will visit a local printer and understand a little more about what print production is like and what it is like to go “on-press.”

Communication

It is expected that you as a class will help and support each other throughout this course and others for that matter. That said, I am of course fully accessible in class, at my office, and via email: nickrock@bu.edu. Please do not use any other email address to contact me. All communication should go through my BU email address or via Slack.

04 Projects

Professional Engagements

Studio · client-based

For Summer 2015 we plan at a minimum, to focus on direct client engagement and we will conduct research based design practice with design studio Epic Decade.

- **Epic Decade** is a teaching + learning studio designing remarkable experiences to inspire, demonstrate, accelerate, and transform organizations in search of new cultural and business models for the 21st century.

05 Assessment

The following specific points will be factored into your final grade for the course:

- **Quality of Work.** Even though we are creating client based work, your work will not be evaluated based upon whether or not the client is happy with it. I will be evaluating your work outside of the client facing process. The work will be evaluated based upon concept, execution and craft.

- **Attendance.** Attendance at each class is mandatory. This class moves quickly since it is a summer course. Discussion and critique are not things that are easily made up and happen regularly. You must contact me in advance if you need to miss a class. Any unexcused absence will reduce your final letter grade. I reserve the right to determine what an unexcused absence is. If you are late, or absent you must follow up with me, as you will still be responsible for the work. I will not chase you down to catch you up. You should be scheduling appointments around your classes since you know your class schedule, and not the other way around.
- **Participation.** Part of the job as a designer is communicating effectively, on a design team, in a studio environment or with clients. You will be expected to be an active member of the studio, particularly during critiques as all feedback is important. Discussion is an important part of the design process. If you are not participating regularly in the discussion you will be asked for your opinion.

In addition to the specific key points above, your general performance will be evaluated based upon a set of learning objectives for design majors here at BU, articulated in the rubric below.

Evaluation: Learning Objectives

OBJECTIVE	LEVEL 1 — UNSATISFACTORY	LEVEL 2 — COMPETENT	LEVEL 3 — ACCOMPLISHED
Process	Student struggles with defining prob lems, researching, generating ideas and / or developing concepts Student fails to participate in critiques Student doesn't employ any method of documentation of work Student fails to demonstrate research as part of the design process Student rarely uses research to de velop content and ideas Student struggles to meet deadlines Student does not set goals or is un able to achieve stated goals Student struggles to balance work load	Student is able to define a problem, employ methods, develop concepts, research and develop concepts Student participates in critiques and is able to document work Student understands the value of thorough research in a graphic design process and is able to employ research into their design process Student understands value of goal setting Student is able to meet deadlines Student satisfactorily balances workload	Student shows thorough under standing of a graphic design studio process; is able to define a problem, employ methods of research and idea generation, develop concepts, critiques and documents work as a way of developing smart, informed and carefully considered solutions to design problems Student understands the value of thorough research in a graphic design process and consistently explores a variety of methods of gathering, col lecting and documenting as a way of developing content and ideas Student manages time efficiently, sets and achieves goals and deadlines and is able to confidently balance a full studio workload
Master Key Principles	Student is unable to demonstrate an understanding of the fundamentals and principles of typography and layout as a way of communicating visual and written messages	Student has a basic understanding of the fundamentals and principles of typography and layout as a way of communicating visual and written messages and demonstrates these skills regularly in assigned projects	Student has an advanced under standing of the fundamentals and principles of typography and layout as a way of communicating visual and written messages and is able to employ these skills in inventive ways

OBJECTIVE	LEVEL 1 — UNSATISFACTORY	LEVEL 2 — COMPETENT	LEVEL 3 — ACCOMPLISHED
Authorship	Student struggles to generate, curate or develop their own content for as signed projects	Student is able to author and curate their own content for assigned projects Student is able to use and understand many tools, media and forms of com-munication	Student understands the role of the graphic designer in professional prac tice and the ability of the designer to help define, shape and also author the content of the work they create.
Design Agility	Student has limited grasp of tools and media Student is unable or has difficulty choosing appropriate technology, me dia or tool to successfully complete a design project	Student is able to use and understand many tools, media and forms of com-munication Students is explores problems through more than one form of media Student is frequently able to choose appropriate mode of technology and media to succesfully complete their design solution	Student exhibits a broad understand ing of a tools, services and a full range of media and forms of com-munication by exploring problems using print, interactive, spatial and experiential, web, interactive, static and dynamic. Is able to choose appropriate mode of technology and media to success fully complete their design solution
History and Context	Student struggles to recall or identify major moments, works, and figures in design history.	Student is aware of major moments in design history and is able to rec ognize some major works and figures as well as some currently practicing designers	Student is able to identify and reference major moments in design history, major and important figures in design history, and currently practic ing designers. Student is able to cross reference and make connections across history

OBJECTIVE	LEVEL 1 — UNSATISFACTORY	LEVEL 2 — COMPETENT	LEVEL 3 — ACCOMPLISHED
Professionalism	Student has limited understanding of the vocabulary of the graphic design field and little to no understanding of related fields. Student unable to, or has difficulty presenting ideas in front of a group Student is unable to, or has difficulty expressing ideas in writing	Student has a basic understanding of vocabulary of the graphic design field and its related fields such as print production, web development and video production Student competently expresses ideas visually and verbally when presenting in front of a group and writing ideas and statements	Student has mastered and is fluent in the vocabulary of the graphic design field and its related fields such as print production, web development and video production

General Grading Criteria

- **A** — You demonstrate an advanced understanding of concepts presented and are able to complete work above and beyond suggested parameters.
- **B** — You exhibit a more than competent understanding of concepts presented and utilize these concepts in an articulate and noteworthy manner.
- **C** — You demonstrate a basic understanding of the information studied and apply this information to assigned problems meeting basic expectations but not going beyond suggested parameters.
- **D** — You exhibit limited understanding of the concepts and complete work below the level required for satisfactory performance.
- **F** — You demonstrate little or no understanding of course material, show little desire or motivation to complete the work or turn in incomplete projects.

07

Materials & Tools

- **Slack** — used to consolidate course communications and manage our projects, as it is a tool used in a professional environment to do just that.